the right of the municipality to demand a revision of the price of the electric current supplied by the "Electrobel" whenever and as often as the municipality might think fit!

The "Electrobel" had completed the work contracted for to the extent of 80 per cent and had sunk millions in the undertaking in hand. Naturally it had made its calculations for a return on its capital on the terms of the original contract. If the clauses of the latter are to be so radically and arbitrarily altered it is bound to incur a huge loss. Such treatment meted out to the foreign capitalist has had the result of frightening him away for good, though his aid would have proved of inestimable value in helping Rumania to-day to surmount the difficulties with which she is confronted.

Owners of real property have also been very unjustly hit by a law promulgated in February, 1932, decreeing that all rents should be reduced by 25 per cent to 30 per cent, all existing contracts being rendered void. Most owners were already in a precarious situation, for they had built with borrowed money, and the recent drop in rents made it impossible for them to meet their engagements and pay off their mortgages, and as a consequence of this an immense number of buildings were being sold up for default, as the *Adeverul* for January 21st, 1932 records. This law, therefore, will complete the ruin of another class of the urban population, and will impress on the minds of all intending investors that it is as risky a proceeding to invest one's money in Rumania as in Soviet Russia. Various municipalities are doing their best to attract unwary investors by holding out to them the most alluring prospectuses and dazzling promises, and it would be well to sound a note of warning so that no more British capital be enticed into Rumanian enterprises, which have proved a veritable bottomless pit.

The writer also committed the folly of relying on the relative immutability of the law, as is customary in other European countries, and leased a certain site in a fashionable Rumanian resort for the purpose of constructing certain dwellings and letting them, all buildings to revert to the original owner of the site after the expiration of a ten-year period. The law reducing rents forces down the revenue by

426 675 427 25 to 30 per cent, but on the other hand, no corresponding increase in the time limit of the lease can be secured, and there is no authority to which one may appeal. Besides, how can one possibly expect to receive more favourable treatment than the banks, which have been ruined by the enforcement of the law cancelling agrarian debts. What is truly surprising is that the Government had been seriously considering the passing of yet another law, cancelling all private urban debts, which, after all, would only have been the natural complement of the agrarian prototype, but this it was prevented from doing by the French financial experts! Rumanian politicians seem to be grievously deficient in the conception of what constitutes right, for otherwise it is impossible to explain the enactment of laws which not only undermine the very foundations of credit but also of property. That this 693 is so may also be inferred from the not very high standing of the judicial administration, which, if the scandals of 1926 be recollected, certainly needs to be overhauled. The then Government of General Averescu, under pressure of an outraged public at the scandalous venality of some judges, was obliged to dismiss several magistrates, including the President of the Bucharest Court, on account of "acts which were found incompatible with the dignity of magistrates," to quote the *Argus* of October 30th and the *Cuvantul* of October 23rd, 1926. Nor can one pass in silence the undignified attitude of the highest magistrate in Rumania, the then President of the highest Court of Appeal, who, setting at naught the findings of the Court, attempted by all imaginable subterfuges and chicanery to evade its verdict, which was unfavourable to him. (See an article headed "When you apply the law, and when it is applied to you" in the *Cuvantul*, October 6th, 1926). . . .

000 Professor Henry Sedgwick, in his "Elements of Politics," opines that "in determining a nation's rank in political civilization no test is more decisive than the degree in which justice, as defined by law, is actually realized in its judicial administration." Judged by this criterion, Rumania must indeed stand very low in the scale of nations, for the law is sadly deficient, as is woefully admitted even by Rumanians themselves. The *Adeverul* of March 3rd, 1932 wrote: "By

435 ture of Greater Rumania. It illustrates the effects of low agricultural prices and high prices of finished goods upon the position of a predominantly peasant population, which cannot realize an adequate profit from the sale of its produce and is unable to buy manufactured goods. It is important to realize this, as it demonstrates one of the reasons for the inability of the peasants to acquire agricultural machinery and improve their methods of agricultural exploitation.

565 471 THE LAND REFORMS. By the beginning of the twentieth century the position of the Rumanian peasantry had reached a stage which could only be compared with that of Tsarist Russia before the abolition of serfdom. Over half of all the arable land was in the hands of a few thousand *boiars*. Most peasants were landless, some possessed small strips of land which were insufficient for the support of a family. Most peasants were still obliged to work for the landlords without pay, and in addition had to pay taxes and other dues. In order to try and increase their income many peasants rented land from the big landowners. But as the landlord was usually the *boiar* for whom the peasant had to do forced labour and to whom he came in time of need for financial help, he soon found that he had often sold his labour power for years in advance. His indebtedness increased with surprising speed; neither his little strip of land nor, indeed, he himself was anything else than part of the *boiar's* property. The position of the peasantry grew even worse when absentee landlordism increased and great trusts managed the running of the big estates.

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